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ABSTRACT

This speech advocates substantial change in the structure and management of local governments and school districts. The discussion focuses on a reconstitution of mission, philosophy, broad goals, and features of local school governance and management. The speaker asserts that the focus of local government around the nation should individually and collectively fix on citizen "well-being" while acknowledging that education is increasingly fundamental to the quality of life for all Americans. (JAM)

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RECONSTITUTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR WELL-BEING AND EDUCATION

the

Paul B. Salmon Memorial Lecture

The American Association of School Administrators

1989 National Convention

Orlando, Florida

by

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PAUL SALMON

RECONSTITUTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR WELL-BEING AND EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

It is a privilege for any member of the American Association of School Administrators to be invited to give the Paul B. Salmon Memorial Lecture. John Hoyle, Professor of Educational Administration at Texas A&M University, set a very high standard in 1987 when he delivered the first Paul B. Salmon Memorial Lecture at AASA's convention in New Orleans. John Hoyle and I share great respect for Paul; he was an enormously effective national leader. We have admired him and were proud to have him as a friend and colleague. It is a challenge for me to share with you today some thoughts and ideas that would meet the expectations that Paul would hold for anyone invited to address this assembly. My remarks are intended as a tribute to him and his AASA leadership of so many years.

Today I will argue for substantial change in the structure and management of local governments, including school districts; and through inference call for marked reform in the philosophy, leadership, and management of institutions at the local level -- including school districts, townships, cities, counties, and other special units that affect the lives of children and youth especially, and the general citizenry as well. I am proposing that the focus of local government be fixed on well-being, acknowledging that education is increasingly fundamental to the

well-being and quality of life for Americans of all ages. I will argue further that local school districts, local school boards, and local school superintendents should be phased out and that new local jurisdictions and authorities must be defined and approved in their place. These changes will need to occur over a protracted period, as much as thirty to forty years. Similar transformations in other local governments may occur as well.

A reconstituted local government for well-being would be responsible for governing such areas as mental health, physical health, public safety, pre-school and nursery school education, adult education, libraries, museums, child day care, adult day care, K-12 schooling, job retraining, employment counseling and placement, provisions for the homeless, literacy, and deinstitutionalization. Today these public services are the responsibility of a melange of agencies and jurisdictions without any policy coordination or focus or continuity of service for individuals over time.

Township government, county government, city government, school district government, and special services governments would all be a part of the reconstituting process. Note the language here. The word is reconstituting, not reorganizing. The new jurisdiction would be presided over by an executive, possibly titled chancellor of well-being, and governed by an elected commission. A broad range of new, as well as traditional, professionals would comprise the public work

force. Federal and state policy would be adjusted to correspond to the reconstituted local well-being governance system.

The mission, philosophy, broad goals, and features of governance and management might best be worked out through local constitutional conventions convened for reconstituting purposes. Such local constitutional conventions would be authorized by state legislatures and encouraged through enabling state legislation. Again, note the emphasis on local constitutional conventions, not state constitutional conventions. Thinking must be concentrated on local vision and responsibility. Thinking cannot be allowed to escape or drift toward state and federal levels, as so often happens when local citizens find it difficult to face their own accountability.

Professor Jack Culbertson, known to many of you, has compared today's challenges confronting educational administration with those of a century ago. Superintendents such as William Torrey Harris in St. Louis and William Payne in Adrian, Michigan, in the last half of the 19th century were incredible leaders! They found themselves in a period of large-scale change where a nation was moving from a rural-agrarian society to an industrial society. They were leaders because they charted a vision for education commensurate with the rapidly changing needs of the society they served. They were not satisfied to be buffeted about by the stiff winds and choppy seas of their time; they saw far beyond the boundaries of their school

districts, exerting leadership on many community fronts, including education.

Culbertson calls now for the same initiatives, the same broad leadership, the same willingness to capture an educational vision that will carry society through the parenthesis between the industrial society and the information age.[2] I am in some respects making the same appeal. I am urging school superintendents and other educational leaders to join in what appears to be, on first blush, a radical structural reform in local government -- reform that would elevate the well-being of individuals and the nation to the point where well-being would become the primary goal of reconstituted local government. Schooling, our contemporary first-order goal, is to be a subsidiary -- but instrumental -- goal in the achievement of well-being. I ask you to join me in considering these proposals.

SOME HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES

Well-being. What an important concept it is at a time when the personal welfare of so many citizens seems to be in jeopardy. Well-being in its simplest meaning refers to matters of health, safety, even comfort. It is the condition of being well--happy, even free of fear and unusual anxiety; it is the ability to survive in capitalist America. Welfare, at a very general level of meaning, is a synonym for well-being; but

well-being is not to be confused with a "welfare state" or being "on welfare." Well-being does not have the same political connotation as welfare often does.

We are searching for a clearer vision of how human beings can move through life enhanced by institutions. Many institutions, public and private, have been constructed to address aspects of well-being, including families, churches, and schools. Now we are in need of a fresh tapestry of individual and institutional interdependence -- a tapestry designed to promote community strength and general well-being.

To contribute to well-being is to assist others in feeling secure, confident, competent, even comfortable with themselves, their friends, their co-workers and, most important, their families. Interdependency is evidence. Mutual respect is essential. As Hugh Heclo has noted ". . . the chains of mutual obligation across generations and in other areas. . ." have become more visible and problematic, raising public and private questions about matters that seemed more settled in earlier times.[3] Heclo asks. "What is it that the younger generation owes to its elders and what can they in turn expect in terms of support from the next generation of workers? What do the childless owe to those with children, if anything, and what support should aged parents expect from their children? What do regions favored by economic change owe to other regions bearing the attendant dislocations of such change. And I would add:

What do rich communities owe to poor communities? What do poor communities have the right to expect from their affluent neighbors in a truly democratic society?

These questions were not alien to the founding fathers as they struggled to frame constitutionally a government mindful of the public-private tensions that were present then and are so abundant now. The tension between "self- sufficiency" and "mutual dependence" is very real in our time as it has been historically.[5] Each concept is anchored in values that are deeply held and widely shared. "Self-sufficiency" translates into "rugged individualism" and "private enterprise"; "mutual dependence" connotes "love thy neighbor" and "my brother s keeper." Over the two centuries of our national history, we have witnessed expressions of these sentiments in national behavior. Mutual dependence has been in evidence often in patriotism, our bonding together to address common enemies -- witness World Wars I and II. The Civil War, on the other hand, was fought in part as an imposition of a northern collective will to ensure individual freedom. The Homestead Act was another example of invoking the public will to enhance individual economic freedom and security. Again, as Hugh Heclo has noted, "Americans as a people were <u>born</u> imprinted with the polarity between welfare (well-being) as self-sufficiency and welfare (well-being) as mutual dependence."[6]

The authors of the United States Constitution signaled the importance of our collective or general welfare in the Preamble. All of us have memorized those lines:

> We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America. (Preamble, U.S. Constitution)

Note the words "we, the people," "a more perfect union," "common defense," "general welfare," and "for the United States." These are far from hollow, meaningless phrases; they are expressions of conviction, national conviction and collective belief, honored and protected for more than 200 years. They are values extended and sustained through a complicated, intricate, often cumbersome set of federal, state, and local governments -- including local school districts.

The local school district, as a governmental form, pre-dates the Constitution by more than a hundred years. From its humble beginnings in the New England colonies, the local school system of governance spread across the country by imitation, acquiring some distinctive characteristics here and there, but never departing far from the form or philosophy that its New England architects gave it.[7] In form, it was marked by geography -- that is a territory, a geographical area to be served. In philosophy, it had a dual purpose: to support and provide schooling, and to do so under local control. For more than three centuries now, little has been done to disturb either that form or philosophy.

When it was written, the United States Constitution was essentially silent on matters of education, reserving that responsibility to the states. State or Commonwealth constitutions, as they appeared, essentially respected the sanctity of local school districts; but they did embed them in the concept of state responsibility for education. They imposed state will on them as local jurisdictions, and even titled local school board members as "agents of the state," subject to constitutional and statutory boundaries of their authority.[8]

In the late 1800s and the first half of the 1900s, the professionalization of school teaching and school administration was developing. Occasionally, leaders from colleges and universities and those from the lower schools collaborated, often involving leading superintendents such as William Torrey Harris of St. Louis and Ella Flagg Young of Chicago. Their collaboration was aimed at several targets, including the depoliticizing of schools, establishing standards, framing curriculum, and clarifying the purposes of schooling.[12] The Committee of Ten and the Committee of Fifteen, comprised of university presidents, professors, and lower school leaders, are examples of influential early 20th century groups having impact on American education through a commentary on aims and purposes.[13]

In 1938, the National Education Association's potent Educational Policies Commission published a widely quoted report

titled The Purposes of Education in American Democracy.14 This was the last comprehensive NEA statement on the aims of education. It appeared twenty years after World War I, in the twilight of the Great Depression and three years before the U.S. entry into World War II. It was a time of struggle. The enormous economic upheaval of the 1930s was continuing. There was still large-scale unemployment, bankruptcy, hunger, and suffering; and there were homeless families on the roads and trains heading west. Thus, the 1938 Educational Policies Commission's goals of education emerged from, as well as rejected, those conditions.

Now I'm going to list for you the four general goals of the Commission. Every teacher and administrator had them memorized. The first was self-realization and included such objectives as the appetite for learning, mastery of oral and written communication, reading, writing, numbers, aesthetic interests, and character.

The second goal was to foster human relationships, incorporating the objectives of respect for humanity, friendship, cooperation, courtesy, appreciation and conservation of the home, homemaking, and democracy in the home.

Economic efficiency was the Commission's third goal, comprised of objectives like good workmanship; occupational choice, appreciation, and adjustment; personal economics; consumer judgment and protection; and buying efficiency.

And the fourth goal, civic responsibility, was made up of objectives such as social justice, social understanding, critical judgment, tolerance, conservation, social applications of science, world citizenship, law observance, economic literacy, political citizenship, and devotion to democracy.

These four goals were widely endorsed a half-century ago. They remain today the last national statement of educational goals in the United States. The disintegration of the NEA in the 1950s and 60s spelled the end of the Educational Policies Commission and, with it, the termination of a national professional capacity to define and endorse broad national educational directions. Since then, we have been, as a nation, essentially aimless and adrift educationally, vulnerable in the extreme to short-term political and economic expediency. The rash of local, state, and national reports of the 1980s, the emergence of "education" governors and "education" presidential candidates; and the prescriptions of corporate executives fill the void. Local districts are awash in a sea of prescriptions, often cosmetic, and absent even a general set of purposes to provide direction and stability.

The 1938 Educational Policies Commission goals are broad and comprehensive. Though reported fifty years ago, they are contemporary. Even further, they address issues of well-being beyond intellectual development: health, recreation, appreciation of the family as a social institution, the

Slightly more remote but germane nevertheless are terrorism, acid rain, nuclear waste disposal, soil loss, despoliation of rain forests, ground water contamination, and infra-structure deterioration.

Obviously, other ages, other generations confronted their own psychological, social, political, and economic dislocation and turbulence. But ours is distinctive in terms of the sources of change and the intensity of change that impact on our selves and our institutions.[16] The sources of change may be far removed from our neighborhoods -- such as terrorism. Terrorism has occupied our psyches intensively in recent years. And, as Lasswell noted, terrorism has provoked a world-wide response in the form of surveillance that is expensive and unending. The intensity of change is most evident in computer technology, which in less than fifty years has affected and transformed many aspects of our lives. To repeat: The distinction between our time and that of our predecessors is in the incredible <u>diversity of sources of change</u> and the <u>intensity of the rates of change</u> within those sources. It is this diversity and intensity and the interactions among them that sets us apart. And within these sources of change and rates of change and the interaction among them reside the threats to our well-being.[17]

INSTITUTIONAL CONTRIBUTORS TO WELL-BEING

There are many notable contributors to individual and collective well-being. Families, schools, churches, hospitals, clinics, police and fire departments, libraries, museums, and parks come to mind. They are traditional and enduring. Hospices, halfway houses, alcohol and drug treatment centers, and shelters for the homeless are more recent. The Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, Alcoholics Anonymous, the American Cancer Society, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and the United Negro College Fund are examples of national organizations that address problems of well-being. And all of these are joined by hundreds of thousands of formal and informal networks and support groups. Though these were non-existent as recent as five years ago, they were put in place to meet human need.

Two respected traditional contributors to well-being are the nation's extensive array of public and private museums and libraries. These are remarkable institutions in their own right; yet they, like public and private education, are undergoing revolution and reform. Public and private museums are experiencing similar transformations. The future of museums, including the threat to their existence, was highlighted in a recent issue of the New York Times. The impact of technology on museums and libraries as institutions is much like that undergone

by hospitals and other health-serving institutions. It is jarring, unrelenting and, in the short run at least, disorienting.

I find it very interesting that schools, libraries, and museums have shared a remarkable co-existence, but have a similarly notable history of independence rather than interdependence. Each is in the business of education and enlightenment. Yet, despite examples of cooperation in some communities, libraries and museums have not acknowledged their common missions; nor have efforts been made to reduce program overlap, repetition, even competition, or to achieve an integrated set of purposes. Technology is likely to force a reexamination of mission and commonality involving these three educational institutions.

For example, as we all know, it is technically possible to move large amounts of information from one place to another instantaneously. Capacity is almost unlimited. A group of public school sixth-grade students in Northern California, Yuba City, may wish to use art information that is located in the J. Paul Getty Museum, a private institution in Los Angeles. The information in the Getty Museum that the sixth graders need in Yuba City could be transmitted in a matter of seconds. As of now, it can't be. The question is one of cost and information control. How would the transmission of data be priced if it could be accessed? Who makes decisions in respect to the control

of such data? In California a few years ago under the leadership of Willie Brown, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, a Commission on Technology was formed. Its purpose was to appraise the need for a new governing system for all educational and enlightening institutions in the state of California. The work of the Commission was based upon the recognition that California is rich in educational resources, but unable to handle questions of accessing information or to provide methods for handling costs associated with dissemination across institutional boundaries. The California Commission explored information sharing between public and private educational and enlightening institutions at all levels, raising implicitly at least the question of whether a new system of educational and enlightenment governance would be necessary soon.

Parenthetically, the same questions of information ownership, accessing, pricing, and sharing exist at the community level. Answers to those questions would fall to the new governing board established for any new local jurisdiction to address well-being.

The California example addresses a part of well-being at the state level. The weight of my concern falls at the local level and the need to fix responsibility for well-being at this level more clearly than in the past. Although our commitment to general well-being is anchored in our nation's Constitution, we have treated it too casually, almost with indifference. We have

created units of local government, such as school districts, and charged them with part of the responsibility, but not the whole of it. Schooling may well be the flagship of a flotilla of approaches to well-being, but it is not the all of it. Schooling must be joined more fundamentally by other contributors to well-being, many that I've identified earlier. Physical and mental health, employment counseling, infant education, pre-schooling, day care, extended day, criminal justice, libraries, museums, community cable, foster care, churches and synagogues are other partners that must be integrated into an emerging concept of local community designed to address well-being. These contributors to well-being are reasonably well-known. Some are public, some private; but each addresses a part, not the whole. Schools focus on the intellect and skills dimensions of well-being primarily; museums on natural and human history; libraries on information; preschools and day care on the early years of life; hospices on the dying; foster care on the special needs populations; employment on economic self-sufficiency. Each is noble and defensible in its own right and historically significant, but as parts they fall short. Thus my proposal is for reconstituting local government involving the phasing out of local school districts, local school boards, and local superintendents, followed by the phasing <u>in</u> of fresh local authorities and jurisdictions. Similar fates may befall other

local jurisdictions as well. We have, in fact, moved partially in this direction already.

GROWING EXPANSION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT'S AND SUPERINTENDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY

Allow me to recite some of the program extensions and expansions that have occurred in many public school districts over the last twenty years. Anyone in this audience could name them. We now have programs that address suicide prevention, employee assistance, adult parenting, teenage parenting, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, preschooling, day care, latchkey children, tutoring by the elderly, and intergovernmental partnerships.

These expansions and extensions of the work of the school occur during summer vacation periods and weekends. Schools open earlier in the morning and remain open late into the night. Some new services are incorporated into the ordinary working day. And even now there is the prospect of some form of compulsory community service to be administered by local school districts. New legislation on compulsory attendance has, in fact, been introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators Sam Nunn of Georgia and Charles Robb of Virginia.

The schools have been unusually receptive and accommodating to a wide range of human needs, many of them extending beyond the ordinary school populations and parent groups. Some critics

argue that the schools have been forced into using their scarce resources for secondary purposes rather than concentrating on schooling. School officials are sometimes chastized for going beyond the defined mission of public education, assuming accountability for functions beyond their ken. On the other hand, other critics believe that the schools have not gone far enough and that there are many unmet needs that schools can and must satisfy. Each of us in this room is well-acquainted with the tensions between those extremes because they surface frequently in our everyday professional lives.

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION

School superintendents and other school officials, especially principals, work conscientiously with other public and private community agencies. In fact, we have had a strong philosophical commitment in many districts to community education, which emerged as a strong curriculum emphasis over the past thirty years. Community educators were prepared through curricula designed to further community education objectives across the country. The Charles W. Mott Foundation in Flint, Michigan, invested millions in an effort to disseminate the concept and to prepare superintendents and other educators to lead in community education. And courses in school-community relations are required for certification in most of the states.

So respect for and devotion to community is not new. Interagency collaboration has, however, become a new theme at the local level. A student of mine at Ohio State University in the early 1980s mapped the interagency cooperation and collaboration involving the Columbus, Ohio, Public Schools. At that time, there were over 200 examples of public/private collaboration. Some were isolated to individual schools, others involved the entire school district. It was a surprising listing and, although I was aware of expanding numbers of collaborative examples, I was unprepared for such an extensive listing. Now, a decade later, the list of examples has probably doubled. Almost daily some districts confront in some form the needs of other populations, other age groups. The AIDS babies, the chronically unemployed, the recently deinstitutionalized, the homeless, the abused, the morally bankrupt, the abandoned come to mind. Something has to be done.

For a series of reasons, local school districts have been addressing a broader spectrum of human need in recent years. But those efforts may not be enough. The need is too great, and that need is growing.

LOCAL DISTRICTS FOR WELL-BEING

What would such an entity -- a local school district for well-being -- be like? Having raised the question, there is a

temptation to say,"I don t know." And in most respects, that is true. Most efforts at educational reform have left the structures and missions of local governments untouched. There has been little intellectual investment in developing new theories of local government. Political scientists, with a few exceptions, have avoided theorizing about local jurisdictions, settling instead for describing them in such terms as chaotic, fragmented, marble-cake, proliferated, ineffective, duplicative, and wasteful.

Venturesome political scientists such as Vincent and Elinor Ostrom at Indiana University, who have generated new theories and fresh language to use in thinking about local government -- and especially in metropolitan areas -- have felt the sting of colleague rebuke.[18] An initiative in New York, however, sounds promising. A project sponsored jointly by the State Academy for Public Administration and The Nelson Rockefeller Institute of Government in Albany is addressing the critical issues of policy, structure, and governance confronting state and local governments. The project involves the participation of persons from the public and private sectors, universities, and both elected and appointed governmental officials. The premise undergirding the work is that the profound changes extant in the world will have a cataclysmic effect upon the demand for community services, including education.[19]

There are no models, no real guidelines to follow in the

invention of a new jurisdiction devoted to well-being. James S. Coleman argues persuasively for the invention of new "social capital" forming institutions. These would augment and, in many instances, replace the social capital formation previously provided by families and other community social capital creating sources such as scouting and non-school related clubs.[20] Coleman describes how, in sequence, fathers, followed by mothers, exited the home to become wage earners. Fathers, lunch buckets in hand, left home first in massive numbers, abandoning in large measure their social capital-forming responsibilities at the turn of the century. Mothers followed, entering the labor force in the mid- to late 1900s, depleting catastrophically the opportunities for close, enduring social relationships with children.[21]

Consequently, the range of exchange has been narrowed between parents and children about academic, social, political, and economic matters. Millions of children enter the classroom bereft of human association so essential to self-esteem. They lack personal confidence about their emerging roles in life and the meaning that formal education can have in their lives. Coleman urges the creation of new institutions designed expressly for child-rearing institutions that can serve as surrogates for parental associations not likely to be reclaimed on a large scale by contemporary families.[22] Coleman goes on to assert:

> The general shape of the demand for a new institution is clear: It is a demand not for further classroom indoctrination, not for any particular content, but a demand for child care: all day; from birth to school age; after school, every day until parents return from work; and all summer.[23]

Coleman adds that these new institutions must be able to induce the kinds of attitudes, effort, and conception of self that children and youth need to succeed in school and as adults.

May I return to my earlier unanswered question. What would this new local entity look like? It would be premature to describe definitive functions, roles, and responsibilities. I am prepared to offer some premises on which this new governmental unit might be constructed, as well as some notions about how to move from where we are to where we must be.

The <u>first premise</u> is that a new jurisdiction must reflect in philosophy and structure a total commitment to well-being, both individual and collective. Its leaders must construct and be guided by a vision of community well-being grounded in a philosophy that supports the general welfare provisions of the U.S. Constitution, encompassing the values of individual self-sufficiency and mutual dependence.

The <u>second premise</u> is that a local government that is devoted to well-being must be locally controlled, much in the fashion that school districts are the province of school boards. The problems of human beings, including those of intellectual development, are across the street, next door, and

down the road. They are not elsewhere, in state and federal places. This is not to dismiss a federal or state role in achieving well-being, but to recognize that those closest to human need on a day-to-day basis must measure up and address such need head-on.

The third premise is that local control in respect to well-being can fix responsibility for monitoring such major threats as hazardous waste disposal and other environmental protection problems. Also, citizens would have an outlet for their concerns at the local level rather than carrying their causes to remote state and federal agencies. The threats to well-being at the Love Canal, for example, were real and local. The threats were not national, although observed nationally. Remedial actions had to happen there, on site, not elsewhere. Thus, the monitoring needed to be there, in the hands of local officials at the place where lives were in jeopardy.

The fourth premise is that such an entity is not a "welfare state" devoted to providing solutions to problems that people have; but rather to providing an enabling capacity, leading to self-sufficiency and civic responsibility.

The fifth premise is that education is now, and likely forever will be, the central factor in achieving well-being; and it may become the organizing center around which other contributors will gather. That being the case, learning must be life-long and compulsory. Data-gathering for each individual

should begin at birth or as soon after conception as possible, continuing through the life span. Edward Zigler of Yale University contends now that every pregnant female should register the unborn child at the local public school.[24] The purpose of such an action would not be to increase public sector regulation over private lives. Rather, Zigler's notion is based on the belief that child service providers need a much more comprehensive view about the cognitive, physical, and psychological development of all children if effective prevention and early intervention services are to be provided.[25]

The sixth premise is that new concepts of support must be developed to break away from traditional patterns of finance, many of which are marked by inequity and unintended negative consequences. A fresh concept of entitlement may be in order, which would be life-long and available to every citizen. It would include support for life-long continuing education encompassing career re-training and help with adaptation to rapid change. It would apply to support for physical and mental health needs, rehabilitation, employment counseling, social capital formation in Coleman's terms, information accessing and utilization, a range of diagnostic services, and even personal financial planning.

Getting from where we are to general acceptance of such a radical departure from conventional experience will take at least as long as it has taken to develop the super computer, roughly

fifty years. Moreover, there are no road maps or reliable human experience, short of violent revolution, to take us there. John Dewey, in his remarkable little book, The Public and Its Problems. observed that:

> The belief in political fixity, of the sanctity of some form of state consecrated by the efforts of our fathers and hallowed by tradition, is one of the stumbling-blocks in the way of orderly and directed change; it is an invitation to revolt and revolution.

So an early task is to forego our attachment to the school district and its mission of schooling and bond with the larger and, in the long run, more important public value of well-being.

It is apparent immediately that the prospect of remaking local government and reconfiguring the scope and content of local control generates a host of problems. Cosmetic reforms now produce difficulties of consequence, but basic structural transformations toss so many things up in the air that prospects of achieving the reconstitution of local government become intimidating.

Two major scholars of this century had something to say about accomplishing large-scale change, either structural or social in content. John Dewey maintained that an essential civic need is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion about public problems.[27] Harold D. Lasswell proposed community-based decision seminars as the means to public learning essential to fundamental change.[28] Lasswell went even further in advocating social planetaria as permanent

locations for community problem solving, financed and managed much in the fashion of public libraries and museums. Dewey contended that citizens have the capacity to pass judgment on new ideas when thoroughly informed about them. Lasswell added a structure and process for the public to learn about its problems and take part in the formulation of solutions in an essentially quasi-political environment. The need for reconstituting local government would be an ideal issue to be addressed through Lasswell s decision seminar process invoking widespread public participation along the way.

The public and private institutions of a democracy, including the institution of government itself, are subject to adjustments at any time according to the wisdom, tolerance, and enlightenment of the individuals who function in them.[29] Private institutions are changing all about us, including financial organizations, hospitals, museums, business, media, agriculture, and transportation. Only governments remain unaltered, albeit there are ebbs and flows of experience within them -- for example strong executives at times, weak legislatures at other times, and the continued power struggles between them. Unchanged are our constitutional and statutory expectations for them. Reports from prestigious sources flow endlessly, many with promising ideas, but none that suggest that we modify, even slightly, local governments so that there is an improved capacity to achieve general well-being which is so desperately needed.

Recently, in November of 1988, the final report of the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship was published. It is titled, The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families.[30] Chapter 3 is called "Toward More Responsive Communities" and contains ten solid recommendations, none of which is fanciful nor cosmetic.[31] Each recommendation, however, is jeopardized because the authors of the report assume jurisdictional status quo. No reconfigurations of local governments are proposed.

How do we approach the task of reconstituting local governments? More specifically, how do we:

- Protect the elderly from marauding, raiding street gangs? oRespond to the growing numbers of babies with AIDS?
- Reduce the catastrophic impact of Alzheimer's disease on our families?
- Cope with the mounting devastation that drugs and alcohol are wreaking on people of all ages?
- Kindle and sustain civic mindedness?
- Maintain faith with the 1938 NEA goal of economic self-sufficiency?

Are current public officials, both elected and appointed, so deeply entrenched that there are no prospects for taking a fresh look at local jurisdictions? Lawrence A. Cremin, Harold D.

Lasswell, John Dewey, Yehezkel Dror, and others believe we can and should have a new look. Cremin has signaled the need for widespread public discussions about our institutions, informally in small groups and formally in organizations such as AASA.[32] Dror argues for promoting citizen policy enlightenment and periodic constitutional revisions.[33] Ostrom believes that Americans will be forced to draw back from the nationalization of society and explore ways to free itself from the central-governmental trap, turning to local self-government for well-being.[34]

From my own perspective, several initiatives are in order:

1. That each of the fifty states establish ways to focus public attention on well-being and the contributions of local institutions, public and private, to its achievement.
2. That professional organizations such as AASA and its state affiliates, joined perhaps by other professional groups, take steps to explore general well-being and the contribution that education is making to its achievement.
3. That the academic community participate in such initiatives by mobilizing its research capacities to support these proposals.
4. That the goal of these efforts be either to <u>confirm</u> the viability of our current configuration of institutions,

including school districts, in respect to well-being, or to generate ideas about their modification or reconstitution -- including the invention of new institutional forms to meet human need.

THE NEW WELL-BEING PUBLIC OFFICIALS

The leaders of emerging units of local government devoted to well-being will need a much broader view of the human condition than most of us possess today. Those who will leader, administrate, and facilitate must be committed to a philosophy of well-being. They must have a good grasp of the myriad ways that the well-being of each person can be approached. Essential to well-being will be skill development and enlightenment as addressed now by a broad range of public and private agencies. But philosophy will be central, a philosophy of well-being. From philosophy, visions of how to achieve general well-being will emerge. Tenets of that philosophy will be anchored in our federal and state constitutions in respect to general welfare. At bedrock will be an administrative understanding of commitment to local control and direction -- the basic philosophical foundation on which education of children and youth between the ages of five and sixteen is based currently.

The philosophy of local control of and responsibility for

well-being will likely be extended and expanded over time to include citizens of all ages. The burden of governance and management will be more severe in some respects than what is experienced now by local township trustees, commissioners, council members, and school board members. The heavier burden will be rejected in the scope of responsibility and the oversight knowledge required of stewards of a radically expanded and more complex enterprise.

A CLOSING NOTE AND SUMMARY

Obviously, the proposed changes in local government are broad in concept and lacking in detail. The focus has been limited to local jurisdictions omitting the self-evident need to achieve parallel accommodations in state and federal policy. The proposal is based on a tacit assumption that the continued extension of burden and responsibility on school districts for meeting human need is nearing the breaking point. Omitted too, is citation in detail to the impact that the reconstitution of local government would have on local private agencies currently devoted to individual and collective well-being.

Basic, too, is the belief that education of individuals can be enhanced through infant and early childhood education and the use of sophisticated diagnostic data that can help produce better educational judgments. Data about a person's physical and mental

A few weeks ago, I heard the story of Tom, a boy of eighteen who took his own life.[36] The biography is sobering, first for the tragedy itself, second for the trail of inadequate professional judgments that were applied to Tom. Eleven professional decisions can be identified in Tom's life, any one of which if made on the basis of adequate professional knowledge might have altered the outcome. Some of those decisions were made by teachers, a school nurse, and two principals; other decisions were made by medical personnel, two military chaplains, a local minister, and a clinical psychologist. The case illustrates how Tom was placed in jeopardy by professional incompetence and the absence of a trail of diagnostic information beginning in infancy that could have made a difference. There are many Toms in our worlds and there will be many more in the future. We must do more to ensure their well-being.

We must reconstitute local government on behalf of Tom and all individuals and for our nation's future well-being.

Footnotes

1. Jack A. Culbertson, "Tomorrow's Challenges to Today's Professors of Educational Administration," unpublished paper presented at the 1988 Conference of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration, Western Michigan University, August, 1988, pp. 4-8.

2. Ibid, p. 9.

3. Hugh Heclo, "General Welfare and two American Political Traditions," Political Science Quarterly. No. 2, 1986, pp. 179-196.

4. Ibid, p. 194.

5. Ibid, p. 182-186.

6. Ibid, p. 185.

7. For a thorough analysis of school districts as units of local government, see Roald F. Campbell, Luvern L. Cunningham, Raphael O. Nystrand, and Michael D. Usdan, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1985). Chapter 4.

8. Ibid, Chapter 8.

9. Ibid, Chapter 5.

10. Ibid, Chapter 3.

11. David B. Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, Manacers of Virtue (New York: Basic, 1982).

12. David B. Tyack, The One Best System (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 129-147.

13. Campbell, et al., pp. 366-368.

14. Educational Policies Commission, The Purposes of Education in American Democracy (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association! 1938), as summarized in J. Galen Saylor and William M. Alexander, Curriculum Planning (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1956), pp. 220-223.

15. Ibid.

16. "Modern Technology: Problem or Opportunity," Daedalus Vol. 109, No. 1, Winter 1980, pp. 3-24. See also Luvern L. Cunningham, "Information Utilization in Educational Administration: The Need for Policy," paper prepared for the American Society for Cybernetics annual meeting, 1982, p. 19.

17. It should be noted that these threats to well-being are worldwide. See Soedjatmoko, "Education Relevant to People's Needs," Daedalus Vo. 118, No. 1, Winter 1989, pp. 211-18.

18. See Vincent Ostrom and Elinor Ostrom, "Public Goods and Public Choices," in E. G. Savas, ed., Alternatives for Delivering Public Services Toward Improved Performance (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 7-49. Also, Robert T. Golembiewski, "A Critique of Democratic Administration and Its Supporting Ideation," American Political Science Review. Vol. 71, No. 4 (December), 1, 488-1, 507.

19. "New York Governance in the 21st Century" (Albany, New York. The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, 1987). 8 p.

20. James S. Coleman, "Families and Schools," Educational Researcher. Vol. 16, No. 6 (August-September) 1987, pp. 32-38.

21. Ibid, p. 32.

22. Ibid, p. 37.

23. Ibid, p. 38.

24. This assertion was made by Edward F. Zigler in an address to the Ohio Commission on Interprofessional Education and Practice, July 1980.

25. Additional support for gathering data early in the life span appears in Thomas T. Kochanek, "Conceptualizing Screening Models for Developmentally Disabled and High Risk Children and Their Families," Zero to Three. Vol. IX, No. 2, December 1988, pp. 16-20.

26. John Dewey, The Public and Its Problems (Denver. Alan Swallow, 1927), p. 35.

27. Ibid, p. 208.

28. Harold 0. Lasswell, A Pre-View of the Policy Sciences (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Company Inc., 1971), pp. 142-157.

29. Educational Policies Commission, The Purposes of Education in American Democracy. (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1938), p. 17.

30. Read The Forgotten Half. Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families. (Washington, D.C.: The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, November 1988), p. 203.

31. Ibid, Chapter 3. See also a summation and commentary on the report which appeared in Phi Delta Kaooan. Vol. 70, No. 4, December 1988.

32. Lawrence A. Cremin, Public Education. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1976), p. 74.

33. Yehezkel Dror, Policymaking Under Diversity. (New Brunswick. Transaction Books, 1986), pp. 295-99.

34. Vincent Ostrom, The Political Theory of a Compound Republic. (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp. 232.

35. Frederick R. Cyphert and Luvern L. Cunningham, "Inter-professional Education and Practice: A Future Agenda," Theory Into Practice. Vol. XXVI, No. 2, Spring 1987, pp. 152-156.

36. Henry P. Coppolillo, "The Seeds of Suicide," unpublished paper delivered at The Ohio Commission on Interprofessional Education and Practice, October 1988.